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EVOLUTION OF SENEGALESE ELITES

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The increasingly rapid development of elites[1] of a non-traditional type is a conspicuous feature of the social change now occurring in all African territories. It is a sign of the most recent phase of the crisis through which colonized societies are passing. The problems connected with the crystallization[2] of such elites vary considerably in different regions and in different economic, political and social contexts. Even inside the group of territories composing French West Africa appreciable local variations can be observed. But everywhere these elites exert ever stronger and more united pressure on existing politico-social organizations in the hope of attaining to the leadership they feel to be their destiny. Wherever we study them, we find the same situation—fraught with conflict: conflict with the existing African social system imposed by colonization; conflict with the traditional ruling classes or what remains of them; internal conflict, when the elites do not—as yet, at any rate—form a homogeneous group, or, alternatively, when divergent trends appear. The same phenomena can be found everywhere, and go to make up a general pattern.

If, however, we wish to understand the discrepancies observed in the pace at which the new elites developed, their composition, their methods and capacity for self-expression, their ambitions, etc., we must study the differences between them. Among the criteria applicable in a first attempt to classify the various regional situations, the following appear to me to be the most important:

1. Extension of education. We have to take into account both a territory's crude school rate and, among other facts: any divergencies between the rates reached by different regions of the same territory; inequalities in the distribution of school facilities on racial, religious or other grounds, the distribution of the school population classified according to the various kinds and degrees of education, the distribution of the school population classified by sex, etc.
2. Types and degree of economic development, i.e. whether or not it has permitted the emergence of social categories well-integrated in modern economic life, and, in particular, with the capacity for investing money: rich farmers (mainly planters), merchants, entrepreneurs, etc.;[3] whether or not an embryonic working class has emerged in urban centres (an elite of manual workers more or less closely linked to the intellectual elite and anxious to assume leadership of a pseudo-proletariat[4] of casual labourers).[5]
3. Role of the traditional structures and social grades. The traditional political, religious and other systems have more or less succeeded in holding their own and the governing classes which made them work have been able to

1. The word 'elite' is used here in a very broad sense. It does not mean a ruling class, but a social category more or less enjoying prestige status and exerting influence, by its example, over the whole or large sections of the population.
2. Crystallization which does not necessarily result in the formation of well-knit groups.
3. The Ivory Coast offers the most typical example of such development.
4. In most cases, it maintains close ties with the district or the group from which it came.
5. The classic example is that of the Senegalese towns.

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preserve much of their prestige;[1] they are sometimes in diametrical opposition to the modernist elites and sometimes try to come to terms with them; occasionally, as the result of historical conditions, the two elites are closely interlocked.[2]

4. Types and degree of tension between the African modernist elites and the European groups. The latter occupy the position of ruling class in the whole community represented by each territorial unit. The conflict is fundamental, yet a balance, however temporary and precarious, between the two groups may sometimes be discerned, though it varies enormously in degree from one region to another and at different times.[3]

The situation in Senegal, compared with that in other parts of French West Africa, exhibits certain special features. Senegal was the first of these territories to be colonized.[4] At the beginning of the new phase which opened after the war, it had the largest number of educated and partly Westernized persons, and it has for several decades had a political life modelled on the West, though of a summary and limited character.[5] At this level of political life, the course of events during the past 10 years affords us a first glimpse of regional divergencies. [668] It is a significant fact that Senegal was not the first French West African territory in which a movement making political demands of some magnitude arose. The acute crises of the immediate post-war period developed elsewhere—in the Ivory Coast—with the founding and expansion of the [665] Rassemblement Démocratique Africain, the first political party in French Africa (Black) with nationalistic tendencies. The Rassemblement Démocratique Africain never succeeded in establishing itself firmly in Senegal, either before or after its change of policy in the 1950's.[6] There is no space here to describe in detail the historical and social background of such events, though I shall have to refer to it several times later in this paper. Some of the basic traits will suffice for mention: aspects of the traditional structures, of contemporary economic development, of the schools' endeavour to promote assimilation.

[563] The principal racial groups inhabiting Senegal,[7] whatever their cultural differences, and whatever their traditional hostility to one another (which has still by no means completely disappeared) all had the same type of social and political organization. They were strictly graded societies divided into endogamous castes, each with its special economic, political, ritual and other functions. In the present context, inter-caste antagonisms and incompatibilities are as a rule more important than racial antagonisms, since several racial groups may have equivalent social gradings or one may have borrowed and adapted another's gradings. This is a fundamental feature; it indicates the framework within which we can explain the problem of relations between [554] the traditional and the modernist elites. For instance, prestige due to education may be superimposed on prestige based on tradition, in particular prestige due to caste; or else the two may be completely separate.[8] Even today a high

1. Either officially or more or less 'clandestinely'.
2. E.g. in South Dahomey.
3. In the Ivory Coast, for example, a period of calm and co-operation followed when the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain dropped certain extreme claims.
4. Trade counters have existed for more than three centuries and the more spontaneously colonial period began more than a hundred years ago.
5. It had four municipalities with full privileges which sent a deputy to the French Parliament.
6. It broke off its alliance with the French Communist party.
7. The Ouolof, the Toucouleur and the Serer.
8. The resistance of the traditional ruling strata to foreign influence explains why, in certain cases, the lower castes were the first to go to school.

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standing in the modern context does not often completely redeem a traditional inferiority. The latter obviously does not prevent accession to such rank, but it does prevent a man from reaping the full benefit of the prestige which it confers. We shall have to revert to the ambiguity which thus characterizes individual situations, because it is an important aspect of the problem of the modernist elites. The old political organizations have either been destroyed or considerably weakened, though the prestige of the aristocratic families who hold the chefferies or are closely connected with them has not completely disappeared. But an important change has occurred: the power and influence of the traditional political chiefs has to a large extent been transferred to the khalifas of the great Islamic sects;[1] the latter represent today the principal force capable of resisting the modernist elite, and the one with which the latter and the political movements identified with it must to some extent come to terms.[2]

The changes due to the new economic conditions resulting from the colonial period can be discerned at several levels. The rural economy has been radically transformed—progressive abandonment of subsistence farming in favour of a single cash crop throughout a large part of the territory.[3] In contrast with regions where a plantation economy has developed, the average farmer's income has remained extremely low. Consequently, what has elsewhere been termed a 'rural bourgeoisie' has not emerged, and the most favoured economic categories coincide, by and large, with the upper strata of the traditional or semi-traditional type (heads of sects),[4] or with those artificially created on the same model by the colonial administration. Again, the group to which the name 'commercial bourgeoisie' has been given is still too small to have much influence;[5] almost all African traders are small shopkeepers and make no appreciable impact on the affairs of the community as a whole. The most significant changes are found at another level: urbanization and industrialization. Senegal is the most highly urbanized territory of French West Africa; about a quarter of the population live in the big towns and the administrative and trading centres. A very large wage-earning class with a steadily growing nucleus of stable labour has developed.[6] A workers' elite has appeared, and intensive trade union activity in the big towns has brought this class into touch with the educated elite (the administrative bourgeoisie, etc.).

This educated elite deserves special attention; in Senegal more than elsewhere, it represents the dominant element among the modernist elites. The educational policy was definitely conceived and organized at the beginning of the colonial period in the context of a policy and a ideology of assimilation. The educational curriculum introduced in the French establishments in Senegal at the beginning of the nineteenth century was essentially foreign to the tradition and culture of the autochthonous societies. Thus, in a recent paper, the author made much of the point that 'it was not a factor making for integration of the individual in his group, but rather—at any rate in the first historical phase—one making for a break. The adaptation of the curriculum and even of teaching methods

1. Their functions are hereditary.
2. Cf. below, remarks on the political parties of the traditional type.
3. In this case, groundnuts.
4. The economic role of the Mouride brotherhood is particularly important: colonization of new lands, experiments in mechanization, etc.
5. The middle-man trade is practically monopolized by the Lebanese colony; in the town of Dakar alone there are more than 5,000 Lebanese.
6. The region of Dakar alone has more than 50,000 wage earners in the private sector.

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to the African social environment was scarcely taken into consideration. The fact that the African languages were, and still are, totally excluded, even in the lowest school classes, brings out this tendency quite clearly, whatever the justification that may have been offered on practical grounds. The original policy has of course been relaxed in certain points; the principle of adjusting the French educational system to local conditions has been accepted—the adaptations being concerned however more with the physical than with the social and human framework. But the basic tendency remains.'

However, the schools could reach—and still reach—only a fraction of the population. And so the training of an 'elite' came soon to be regarded as a necessary first stage in the process of assimilation. The two ideas emerge closely intertwined in Faidherbe's famous declaration of 1860: 'Everyone can reach the same goal when he satisfies the conditions required of all of you alike, conditions which we are today putting within your reach. You see young men from the Christian families of Saint-Louis, who after a good start in the mission schools, go and continue their studies in a secondary school in France, come back fit for filling the highest positions in the colony. That road is open to you all alike. We are ready to facilitate access to the liberal professions for every child who shows exceptional talent at school. . . .' As a matter of fact, those, as yet few in number, who at the start of the colonial period received instruction on Western lines were supposed to be the answer to immediate, limited needs. The main object was to train interpreters, lower grade civil servants, clerks, etc., as the indispensable auxiliaries in the establishment of a colonial administrative and commercial system. Their role was a humble one, but they shared in the prestige of the European group and also, to some extent, in its privileged economic position. The notion of an elite rapidly acquired a wider and hazier signification; it came to cover all those who were thought to serve as a link between the colonizers, the bearers of civilization, and the untaught masses who were destined gradually to acquire it. In fact, the eager adoption of European values, and the acceptance of assimilationist policies characteristic of the period up to the last war, accentuated the trend towards a rift between the indigenous elite and the masses who still adhered to their traditional cultural and social systems.[1] A point deserving emphasis is the considerable attraction exerted by the centres of assimilation, notably the 'four communes',[2] the natives of which very soon received French citizenship, and in which education developed much more rapidly than elsewhere.[3] These events in the recent history of Senegal explain why prestige in modern times was focused on the 'intellectual' elite,[4] and why the latter made a considerable impact on that colony sooner than they did on the other French West African territories.

Intensive investigations have been made in the principal urban centres of Senegal[5] to ascertain the aspirations of the various population classes and the models they adopt. They cover adults as well as children. More summary samplings taken in rural surroundings show that there is less difference in this matter between the city and the country than might have been supposed.

1. Firm links subsisted, however, as will be seen later on.
2. Dakar, Gorée, Saint-Louis, Rufisque.
3. Multiplication of primary schools, introduction of secondary education, etc.
4. Taken in a very broad sense; for a long time, the mean type of this new intellectual elite was the *certifié* (the holder of the primary school certificate).
5. By the sociology section of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire.

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This is a significant fact; high prestige, more or less definitely acknowledged by the whole population, crystallizes around professions, functions or situations which are considered to be 'intellectual'—implying in fact a minimum of Western-type learning. Prestige on economic grounds seems to be definitely on the decline.[1] At Dakar, Thiès and Saint-Louis du Sénégal, adults were questioned about the trade or occupation they would like their children to take up. A vast majority of the socio-vocational categories (unskilled and skilled workers, traders, clerks, civil servants, etc.) from which the population sample under study was taken gave the same answer. Between 65 and 80 per cent mentioned an intellectual profession. Those most frequently cited were teaching (primary or secondary school teacher) and the liberal professions (lawyer, doctor, etc.); the technological professions (engineer etc.) were much more rarely specified.[2] One of the commonest answers was that vague but highly significant term, 'civil servant'. The fact is that the trend of education in the period before 1945 helped to establish a very close link between education and a job in the administration; this is still the case, despite the changes effected in the last few years. Similar attitudes are found in the results of surveys among children in the primary schools at Dakar. Among those who replied specifically[3]—about three-quarters of the children questioned—more than 80 per cent expressed a preference for an occupation considered to be intellectual, irrespective of their father's occupation; next came certain manual trades, with commerce far behind. The choice of an unspecified administrative job was less frequent than among the adults. It follows that the view generally taken about education—including primary education—viz. that it will lead almost inevitably to an intellectual occupation,[4] however modest, remains very stable; but it is less and less in keeping with the realities of the situation.

A brief study of the facts in the development of the educational system will allow us to make a first evaluation of the system. The crude school rate rose rapidly from 1946 to 1953 and has since continued to rise pretty regularly (16 per cent in 1953, 18 per cent in 1954, about 20 per cent in 1955). Senegal's early advance in this respect explains why the increase is less steep there than in most of the other French West African territories.[5] True, the school rate is still relatively low (and a fairly large proportion of the children do not complete even the primary course and will probably soon lose such learning as they have acquired), but a plateau was reached several years ago: primary education turns out many more pupils than the 'administrative bourgeoisie'—characteristic of the colonial period—or its equivalent in private enterprise can absorb. Formerly, the surplus of the educated population could be absorbed by the manual trades or by migration to other territories. But this second door is gradually closing now that these other territories are catching up in education. Moreover, the slow pace of economic expansion precludes any big increase in the number of openings for technical workers or in the supervisory grades in industry.[6] This is the justification for the talk about the educational over-

1. Material security (e.g. that enjoyed by civil servants) comes to be desired more often than actual wealth.
2. They are only beginning to acquire some prestige; the number of students choosing this branch has risen considerably in recent years.
3. Children from 10 to 14, in the 'intermediate' classes.
4. A job in the bureaucracy was for years the standard aim.
5. The school rate in the Ivory Coast almost trebled between 1946 and 1953.
6. Limited, but chronic unemployment, already exists in Dakar.

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571 178 871 equipment of Senegal in relation to the existing employment market. These facts must, however, be considered from another angle. The real problems are those of the true integration of education into a developing social environment, its adaptation to various local situations, and the adjustments which must be made in the Senegalese people's conception of education. These problems look, of course, more acute in the big towns, particularly in the former 'centres of assimilation',[1] which have often reached a relatively high school rate (sometimes more than 50 per cent); in many rural districts the [369] critical phase is still a long way off. Recent changes in the position are marked by another important feature to which I shall revert at greater length: the difference in the distribution of the school population classified according to the various kinds of education. The past 10 years have been marked by the development of secondary and technical education, and the introduction of local higher education. At the beginning of 1955, pupils and students were distributed approximately as follows among the different types of education: 87 per cent in primary schools, 9 per cent in secondary schools, 2 per cent in vocational training schools, 2 per cent in higher education and its various equivalents.[2] At the same time education in French West Africa ceased to be an almost isolated system providing degrees and diplomas which were not recognized in metropolitan France and qualified their holders only for subordinate positions in most occupations.[3] The intellectual elite is becoming steadily more diversified. Its ideals are being noticeably modified; some of its prestige values are being revised; the masses are beginning to change their idea of what they mean by the elite. This is a transitional stage, with its own special tensions.

178 571 369 871 At this stage in the development of education—the outstanding fact in which is that, particularly in the urban primary schools, the demand exceeds the supply[4]—the signs are already fairly evident of a trend towards less mobility in the social scale. The prospects of reaching the ranks conferring most prestige differ in the towns and the rural zones, for the reasons already indicated. They are also tending to be less evenly distributed among the various sections of the urban population as the latter becomes more diversified. It is not, however, a case of the urban population breaking up into closed or nearly closed groups; none of the discernible social categories are of this character, nor can they be in any way likened to social classes.[5] In particular, relations based on kinship in the widest sense of the term continue to play a fundamental [602] role, and maintain in being close ties among all the individuals composing the family group. Severance of these relations occurs only in extreme cases. Nevertheless, a trend towards the crystallization of social categories does appear, through the mere accumulation of circumstances.[6] The problem has been studied in a recent work the principal points of which I will venture to [963] recall.[7] A survey of the urban district of Dakar—confirmed by later research in other cities—showed certain significant differences in the social origins of

1. The 'four communes' mentioned above.
2. Including young people studying in France.
3. Even in teaching, medicine, etc.
4. In Dakar it became necessary to establish part-time classes to meet an ever-rapid increase in demand.
5. Cf. P. Mercier, 'Aspects de la Stratification Sociale dans l'Ouest Africain' (Aspects of social stratification in West Africa), *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, XVII, 1954.
6. Studied, e.g. by G. Balandier, in *Sociologie des Brazzaville Noire* (Sociology of the coloured population of Brazzaville), Paris, 1955.
7. Cf. P. Mercier, op. cit.

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the individuals questioned; and these differences are likely to become sharper— 178
45 per cent were farmers' sons, but considerable variations appeared according 571
to the socio-vocational category. The proportion of unskilled workers was 369
80 per cent; it was only 42 per cent for skilled workers and craftsmen; still 463
lower (33 per cent) for civil servants and subordinate office employees (the widest category of the 'administrative bourgeoisie' characteristic of the colonial period), 28 per cent for senior clerks and civil servants, for members of the liberal professions in the widest sense[2] it was no more than 21 per cent. These last three categories taken as a whole represent the 'intellectual professions', according to the meaning still ascribed by the great majority of Senegalese to that phrase. Of those who had a father already in one of these professions, three-quarters were engaged in the same work. The same process of stabilization can, however, be observed, though less clearly, among specialized workers; of those whose father was a worker, nearly two-thirds still belonged to the same class; most of the others had been absorbed into the 'administrative bourgeoisie'. These, moreover, are the two chief categories,[3] from which there has emerged a new type of elite which really began to grow in size only after the last war.

Important changes in outlook, not only in Senegal, but in the whole of 178
French West Africa, have accompanied this most recent historical phase. 571
From the elite of the strictly colonial type as defined above there has begun to emerge—and even to take on separate existence—a new intellectual elite, still a relatively small group.[4] This elite, which might be termed that of the [463]
liberal professions—this time in the strict sense of the phrase—having a distinctly higher level of education and more definite professional competence, is able to lay claim to a quantity of posts until now almost exclusively held by Europeans. The category was not completely non-existent during the pre-war period; it developed earlier in Senegal than in the other French [873]
West African territories as a result of Senegal's possession of an embryonic system of secondary education.[5] Being numerically weak, this elite had an opportunity of associating, to a certain extent, with the European population, a fact which manifestly lessened its prospects of playing an active role and assuming the leadership of the African masses. Furthermore, it continued to follow the policy of assimilation and was the only element in the 'colonial elite' which succeeded in achieving it. It could find only a limited field of action in the political life of the 'four communes'. It consisted mainly of lawyers, a few members of the teaching profession and doctors and even a few administrators. It doubtless set an example for a colonial elite of a far inferior grade from which it was not entirely cut off; it showed them the road to be taken by the seeker after modern knowledge. Prestige of the kind hitherto enjoyed [554]
only by Europeans was transferred to them and was thus seen to be no longer out of reach and so engendered ideas of power—a share, even if limited, of political and administrative powers—and wealth, or material security, at the lowest. This role continued to develop after the war, though with a rather abrupt change of direction.

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1. I.e. those holding posts of responsibility, regardless of their educational level.
2. Mainly, teaching, medicine, etc.
3. The first, especially.
4. Only a few hundred individuals, including members of the 'colonial elite' who were belatedly given fresh opportunities for completing their studies and reaching a higher status.
5. *Lycée* at Saint-Louis, later at Dakar.

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The reason is not to be sought solely in the increase in numbers of this intellectual elite though that was quite substantial. Trained in Europe and remaining in touch with the world outside, it was the first section of the population to become consciously aware of the 'colonial situation',[1] and it immediately made an attempt to build up ideological systems which soon acquired crucial influence. Next, the changed pattern in the relations between Europeans and Africans speeded up the development of situations in which conflicts became inevitable, and encouraged the maintenance of close contact between the new and the colonial elites. I shall revert to this point later. True, tension existed, especially between generations, the older strata of the colonial elite having sometimes to defend the positions they had won.[2] But the younger people tended to identify themselves with the new elite, to accept its guidance and to share, more or less confusedly, in the same awakening to the colonial situation. Thus, the intellectual elite, in the broadest sense of the term, embarked in a new direction, and the political consequences of this change are now beginning to be seen. The problem of relations with the workers' elite which has emerged in the past few years is more complex; I shall come back to it in connexion with trade union activity.

In the typical pre-war situation, the African elite had little chance of competing with the European managing class, which was much less numerous that it is now.[3] It was trained to be what might be called an auxiliary elite. The new elite, on the contrary—notwithstanding the administrative and economic expansion of the past 10 years—will inevitably find itself in competition with Europeans in the managing and supervisory grades in an ever growing number of specific cases. Though still few in numbers, it has difficulty in finding a place in the territory's administrative and technological machine. It is a paradox that in a country immensely in need of responsible personnel, both managers and technicians, demand seems somewhat to exceed supply. In French West Africa, and particularly in Senegal, the government officially recognizes the existence of an 'employment problem for holders of diplomas'. One of the causes of this situation is no doubt the total absence of planning in the training of elites.[4] But the real explanation must be found in political circumstances and race relations.[5] The effort to 'Africanize' the upper grades encounters firm resistance, and so the rise of the elites is apparently seriously checked by the growing number of situations in which Africans and Europeans compete and which the two groups explain in diametrically opposite ways.[6] It is a significant fact that several Senegalese who have completed their studies in France have remained there, because they would be unable to find jobs for which they could apply at home. The problem is obviously even more acute in the private sector than in the administration.[7] Also, the European population has considerably increased in the past 10 years:[8] it has more than doubled in Senegal, tripled at Dakar—where it now represents about 10 per cent of the population.

1. Cf. the studies of G. Balandier, and in particular: *Sociologie actuelle de l'Afrique Noire* (Present sociology of Negro Africa), Paris, 1955.
2. Especially in the administration.
3. Cf. P. Mercier, 'Le Groupement Européen de Dakar: Orientations d'une Enquête' (The European group at Dakar: Suggested line for a survey), *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, XIX, 1955.
4. An effort is now being made in this direction.
5. Cf. P. Mercier, 'Le Groupement Européen de Dakar', *op. cit.*
6. Patterns of thought based on the pre-war situation play a fundamental role here.
7. Where the trend, as yet timid, towards 'Africanization' of the upper grades can be discerned.
8. A general phenomenon in French West Africa which involves important changes in relations between Africans and Europeans.

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cent of the population. Thus, the number of Europeans in intermediate or subordinate posts has substantially increased and the range of competitive situations, instead of growing less is being regularly extended. This affects not only the new elite, but a large segment of the old 'administrative bourgeoisie', and even, to some extent, the workers and lower supervisory grades in industry. And so, while—in theory—opportunities for reaching the highest ranks and simultaneously entering the European group (a consequence foreseen by assimilationist ideology) have increased with the development of education, in reality a radical change in the whole social structure has multiplied the causes of conflict. New factors have cropped up abruptly: further assimilation is gainsaid, Europeans and Africans become more and more sensitive to the realities of race, etc. Obviously, the political consequences of such conflicts are considerable.

I have mentioned cases in which a rift occurred between the elites and the masses, in the early years, at any rate, of the 'colonial elite'. This fact needs some further explanation, while the question of the relations between the 'educated' and the 'traditional' categories calls for re-examination on a wider basis. The stereotyped patterns maintained by the European administration underline the points of divergence. The administration has besides had a tendency—and not only in Senegal—to underestimate the influence of modernist elites and to depreciate their impact upon the population as a whole. True, important tensions can be observed, and some antagonism developed between the citizens (those of the 'four communes'), from whom the major part of the 'colonial élite' came, and the subjects in the other parts of the territory; but such tensions virtually disappeared with the legal changes introduced immediately after the war, a fact which is proof enough how superficial the points of divergence were. The 'educated' classes, moreover, sought to reap all possible profit from the power they acquired in their administrative functions, or in their role of intermediary between producers and the big commercial companies; and that attitude naturally set up a great many local conflicts. Sometimes they sought compensation for their inferior standing in the traditional framework by asserting themselves in the exercise of their new functions. As we have already shown, however, the population as a whole recognized the prestige of the new intellectual elite. True, their prestige did not necessarily displace the traditional prestige, but the two can coexist, a circumstance which stands out most clearly in rural districts. So, even if the 'educated' African has difficulty in fitting into the traditional system or even the family group, even if he is often a maladjusted element, he is rarely the fish out of water whom so many colonial observers considered him. All the elements of the population are still continually in touch.[1] There are two basic reasons for this. First, the range of family relationships is still a very wide one and they themselves are still effective; they maintain their hold on the 'educated' African even when he has left his birthplace. Secondly, religion—chiefly Islam in Senegal—and above all, membership of a sect, which is practically hereditary, continue to be important. The fact that tension between elites and masses led to nothing but quite limited and temporary breaks explains why the recent and entirely conscious effort to retie loose bonds was carried through with comparative ease. It was the new elite that, with political aims in view, inspired this effort. Usually too far removed from the

[1] The vitality of racial or regional associations is significant in this respect.

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178 571 masses, it found in the 'colonial elite' the go-between it needed for the resumption of contact to which it aspired.

The activity of this new elite is beginning to be discernible in its political and trade union work, and its basic aspirations can be defined. As has already 665 been said, a Western-type political life was introduced fairly early in one part 178 of Senegal. Political parties were formed; after 1946, their influence extended 571 throughout the territory. In a recent paper[1] we stated that they had become, in the 'four communes', an almost traditional part of the social system. Once they reached the whole of Senegal, they acquired an enormous body of followers, the divisions among whom reflected successively—or simultaneously, according to the district—a number of historical, social, ethnic and family rifts. Thus, the antagonism between the Socialist party and the Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais, which has been a salient factor over recent years, did but reproduce according to time and place, the antagonism between former 'citizens' and former 'subjects', Ouolof and non-Ouolof, Moslems and Catholics, one Moslem sect and another, etc. On the whole, the 'colonial elite' has assumed the leadership of these parties.[2] But recent surveys have shown that, in the urban centres at any rate, membership in a political party might [369] be commoner among the illiterate elements than among the 'educated'. This is a clear indication of the gap between the political parties and the present ambitions of the elites. A strongly held local position or the prestige of certain leaders is the reason why the traditional parties, though ill adapted to the present situation, have succeeded in keeping afloat. However, the waning influence of the Socialist party (the oldest organized party) was the sign after 1950 of the start of a new phase. The young elite from the liberal professions, followed by numerous young members of the 'colonial elite', remained markedly aloof from these movements, which seemed to efford no opportunity for the political action in which they intended to engage. Their sympathies went to a movement of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain type, although they were unable to impose it because of the strong positions held by the traditional parties. Yet some of the more influential members of this young elite finally decided to join the Senegalese party which seemed to have the strongest hold over the popular masses, the Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais.[3] There, they will doubtless play an important role. The point has been reached at which the new elite is seeking to take over the torch from the 'colonial elite', but with political ambitions of a much more radical nature; I shall consider later the ideological aspects of the problem. In the case of the trade unions, 460 the position is slightly different. Their activity,[4] of recent origin, soon acquired 178 deeper significance. The more energetic elements of the 'administrative bour- 571 geoisie', in alliance with the still small working-class elite, embarked in the trade unions on a course of action which was more directly effective than that of the political parties.[5] The climate of thought, directly or indirectly influenced by theories of Marxist origin, favoured the growth of an awareness of the 'colonial situation'. In this respect, however, the new intellectual elite played

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1. Cf. P. Mercier, *An Experimental Investigation conducted by means of Questionnaires in the town of Dakar*, report presented to the Conference on the Social Impact of Industrialization and Urban Problems, organized by Unesco at Abidjan, 1954.
2. As here, needless to say, certain members of an elite formed from the liberal professions, which had already emerged before the war.
3. In which they represent the 'left' wing.
4. Most of the unions are affiliated to the trade union federations in France.
5. And more resolutely modernist in its outlook.

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only a limited, and very indirect, part. Between this group and the working-class elite certain persisting tensions can be descried; a survey among the younger members—students, young workers—has brought to light more or less radical divergencies. However, the new elite is trying to extend its activity to the trade union sphere. A confederation of African workers independent of the organizations in metropolitan France has recently been founded, in which the young intellectual elite will apparently be extremely influential. This would be the counterpart of its entry into organized political action. In another domain, significant changes are occurring: the 'cultural associations' have a much more important role than their name would imply.[1] These are made up of the intellectual elite (in the widest sense in which I have used this term), which seeks by these means to avoid being relegated to a position of isolation, to acquire greater influence in the education of the people—e.g. through theatrical representations in one of the local languages—and to rediscover the highways of traditional African culture.

It is the new elite that has given expression to this desire for a 'return to the fountain-head'. A reaction, against assimilationist policies has appeared. From the acceptance of assimilation characteristic of he preceding generation opinion turned first to less sharply defined positions—typified by the slogan 'assimilate, don't be assimilated'—and then to attitudes of refusal, the details of which are still not very clear. Such attitudes accompany a lush ideological growth, to which only a very brief reference can be given here. It is not exempt from inconsistency; it is intertwined with growths of very different origin, sometimes hostile to each other. The only point at which all these ideologies concur is that they one and all are the expression of an intense reaction against colonialism—and obviously against the policy of assimilation—and serve as a basis for a growing 'nationalism'.[2] I will mention only the following points: the revival of African cultures and the affirmation of the common elements in a pan-African or, more generally, a Negro culture; the development of a veritable mythology around the notion of 'Negrohood'[3] and of a sort of 'counter-racism', the end-result of which is to shut the door on the outside world—i.e. primarily the Western world; the reinterpretation of history through a reversal of the perspective, a method applied not only to the history of the slave trade and the colonial period, but to the whole history of Africa as well;[4] the forging from Marxist theories of an ideological battering ram, to be used in a specifically African anti-colonial drive. The results of all these efforts make rapid headway throughout the 'educated' classes.[5]

The above picture is unavoidably only an incomplete outline. I have merely sought to bring out the importance of the present transitional phase and its characteristic processes. A new intellectual elite is taking up the torch from the 'colonial elite' which in Senegal had already succeeded in gaining appreciably greater influence than in the other French West African territories; there has been no break between them. And yet tensions and possibilities of conflict exist. Nevertheless, the conscious search for points of contact with

1. The study of political problems is a particularly important part of their activity.
2. In the African context, this term is used very broadly, to cover all anti-colonial movements.
3. The review *Présence Africaine* offers many examples of articles showing the influence of this idea.
4. The recent book by Cheikh Anta Diop, *Nations Nègres et Culture* (Negro nations and culture), Paris, 1955, is a highly significant example of what is being done on these lines.
5. There are still more trends, but they indicate a change of outlook which will probably become deeper with time.

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the masses which are still partly traditionalists helps to strengthen the ties between the masses and the elite—ties never completely broken. General acceptance of the example set by the elite testifies at another level to the permanence of those ties (despite frequent conflicts, misunderstanding, and failures at adaptation). However, certain traditional factors making for heterogeneity still enter into the picture. Tensions can most easily degenerate into conflicts when relations between members of different racial groups, or different castes, are involved. That is a problem which cannot be studied in detail here. But the survival of such rifts (other examples in Negro Africa show that they may reappear after being temporarily suppressed) is a basic fact. A long time will probably be needed before the obstacle they represent to the growth of a homogeneous elite wielding universal influence can be overcome in Senegal. But only when that has been done can the broad general trends briefly described above find their complete expression.

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